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# BACKGROUNDER

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Ministry of Advanced Education

## PRIVATE POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Private post-secondary institutions in B.C. offer two main types of education leading to credentials: degree programs, regulated by the Degree Authorization Act; and career training programs, leading to diplomas and certificates, regulated by the Private Career Training Institutions Act.

### Private career training

- The Private Career Training Institutions Act, which came into force in November 2004, regulates private institutions in B.C. offering a broad range of career programs leading to such jobs as auto mechanic, art therapist, pharmacy technician, practical nurse, long-term care aide and payroll administrator. The act created the Private Career Training Institutions Agency, which registers private career trainers and offers a voluntary accreditation process.

- The agency also administers the Student Training Completion Fund, which guarantees students a refund of their unused tuition if their institution should close unexpectedly.

- Among the changes announced today are measures to ensure greater transparency in the way private career trainers operate in British Columbia. The Private Career Training Institutions Agency will:
  - Publish a list of all registered private training institutions seeking accreditation.
  - Report the names and affiliations of those taking part on accreditation teams in the agency's annual report and on its website.
  - Work with the ministry and the degree quality assessment board more closely on common issues and concerns.

- New election criteria for future members of the agency's board will ensure a broad base of skills, including business and corporate governance. Each member will receive a letter outlining the board's mandate and responsibilities.

### Degree programs at private institutions

- Under the Degree Authorization Act, which came into force in November 2003, private and out-of-province public post-secondary institutions must receive consent from the Minister of Advanced Education before they provide, advertise or grant degrees in British Columbia, or use the word "university" for educational purposes.

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- Proposals from public and private institutions for new degree programs – baccalaureate, master's and doctoral – are reviewed by the degree quality assessment board, which advises the minister. The board also reviews associate degrees from private and out-of-province public institutions. This ensures consistent and high-quality education standards are met and maintained by institutions in the provincial post-secondary system.

- To receive consent to offer a degree program, institutions must post a bond to protect students' unused tuition should the school close, and make arrangements to ensure students' transcripts will be available.

- Private institutions in B.C. offer a range of degree programs, including business administration, economics, linguistics, counselling, education and geography.

- Among the changes announced today are measures to enhance transparency in the degree-granting process:
    - For new applications, the full program proposal is now posted on the ministry's website, rather than a summary, to better inform the public about each degree proposal. (Go to www.aved.gov.bc.ca, and click on Degree Authorization and then Applications Under Review.)
    - Summaries of recommendations from the degree quality assessment board are now posted on the ministry's website, along with the minister's decision. (Go to www.aved.gov.bc.ca, and click on Degree Authorization and then Recommendations and Decisions.)

- The ministry will also review the Degree Authorization Act's enforcement and penalty sections.

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